

a continuous transport mechanism for moving secondary sample tubes within the system;

first and second sample tube transfer stations, respectively, for coupling to first and second analyzers, the first and second sample tube transfer stations adapted to move the secondary sample tube from the continuous transport mechanism to an interface of a first or second analyzer; and

a host computer, the host computer receiving sample identification information and issuing a sample testing message that includes one of the first and second analyzers as a destination.

REMARKS:

Claim 20 is amended; the marked up version of the amended claim is attached hereto pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(ii). No new matter is introduced. Claims 1-34 are pending in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Applicant believes the foregoing amendment complies with the requirements of form and thus may be admitted under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(a). Alternatively, admission is requested under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(a) as presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal.

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. The grounds of the rejections in the outstanding Office Action are the same as in the previous Office Action dated April 16, 2001. The Examiner maintains his belief that the specification does not support the limitation of immediate storage tube location with an associated alert mechanism for identifying when the immediate sample is loaded into the system as recited by claims 11 and 24. In particular, the Examiner notes that the reply to the previous Office Action is not persuasive because the pages cited by applicants in support of their argument are not correct. In response, applicants corrected typographical errors in the cited page and line numbers as shown in bold below.

The specification teaches that the clinical chemistry system of the present invention provides a predetermined number of immediate or STAT tube locations 36